



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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STAY SAFE AROUND RAILROAD TRACKS

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE; STAY AWAY FROM THE RAILS

Rockford, IL – June 20, 2011 - The Rockford Fire Department, along with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), would like to remind everyone to be thoughtful when near or around railroad tracks.

The railroad tracks and structures are owned by the railroad company and is private property. Just like the property you or your neighbors own. This means that you could be charged with trespassing, seriously injured, or even killed if you take that short cut across the railroad tracks, fish from railroad bridges, or operate all terrain vehicles on or along railroad tracks.

The FRA's goal is to reduce grade crossing and trespass incidents and urges all citizens to take extra precautions and stay alert. For the year 2010 the United States experienced 450 trespass fatalities and 389 injuries all preventable if we follow these simple **Safety Tips** listed below.

Please keep yourself and your family safe, remember to stay off railroad rights-of-way, Stay away from railroad bridges and other structures, stay alive to live another day.

STAY OFF, STAY AWAY, STAY ALIVE

- **The only safe place** to cross railroad tracks is at a designated public crossing with either a crossbuck, flashing red lights or a gate. If you cross at any other place, you are trespassing and can be ticketed or fined. Cross tracks only at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings.

- **Railroad tracks, trestles, yards** and equipment are private property and trespassers are subject to arrest and fine. If you are in a rail yard uninvited by a railroad official you are trespassing and subject to criminal prosecution; you could be injured or killed in a busy rail yard.
- **It can take a mile or more to stop** a train, so a locomotive engineer who suddenly sees someone on the tracks will likely be unable to stop in time. Railroad property is private property. It is illegal to be there unless you are at a designated public crossing.
- **Trains overhang the tracks** by at least three feet in both directions; loose straps hanging from rail cars may extend even further. If you are near the right-of-way next to the tracks, you can be hit by the strapping hanging from the train.
- **Do not cross the tracks** immediately after a train passes. A second train might be blocked by the first. Trains can come from either direction. Wait until you can see clearly around the first train in both directions.
- **Flashing red lights** indicate a train is approaching from either direction. You can be fined for failure to obey these signals. Never walk around or behind lowered gates at a crossing, and **DO NOT** cross the tracks until the lights have stopped flashing and it's safe to do so.
- **Do not hunt, fish, or jump** from railroad trestles or bridges. There is only enough clearance on the tracks for a train to pass. Trestles are not meant to be sidewalks or pedestrian bridges!
- Never walk, run, cycle or operate all terrain vehicles (ATVs) on railroad tracks, rights-of-way or through tunnels.

To learn more about safety around railroads visit Operation Lifesaver Inc at www.oli.org or to schedule a **FREE** safety presentation, please call **The Rockford Fire Department** at **815-987-5660**.

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